

Congressman Travis Childers Supports Our Troops and their Families, Votes for 2009 Supplemental Appropriations Bill

May 15, 2009

Washington, DC - Congressman Travis Childers (D-MS) joined his colleagues yesterday in passing the 2009 Supplemental Appropriations bill to support American troops serving overseas and their families. The legislation will provide troops with the equipment they need, allocate funds for combating terrorism in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and invest in military health care and family services. The bill won overwhelming approval in the House by a vote of 411-0.

"Our troops deserve first-class equipment, as well as the resources necessary to succeed in their efforts to root out terrorism and protect our country," said Congressman Childers. "The Supplemental Appropriations bill provides significant funding for initiatives in Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as equipment to protect the honorable men and women who sacrifice their own safety to preserve America's security."

"This legislation also allocates funds for equipment that could help promote economic development and create or save jobs in North Mississippi. The bill includes \$4.8 billion for MRAP vehicles, some of which are manufactured in the First Congressional District."

The Supplemental Appropriations bill includes the following measures to meet our troops' needs and implement successful plans in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan:

- Includes an amendment to prohibit funds in this or any prior act from being used to release detainees from Guantanamo Bay into the U.S.
- Provides our troops with everything they need during the remainder of FY 2009, including \$4.8 billion for Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles, some of which are developed and manufactured at a facility in West Point that employs more than 500 people.
- Retroactively pays service members and veterans \$500 for every month they served under stop-loss orders since 2001.
- Has a plan to remove all combat troops in Iraq by August 2010 by beginning to wind down

the number of troops over the next several months.

- Funding for Afghanistan, including funds for training Afghan security forces and police; economic development, strengthening governance, and expanding the rule of law; and diplomatic operations.
- Funding for Pakistan, including funds for training and equipping the Pakistani security forces for counterinsurgency; addressing the economic crisis, strengthening governance, expanding the rule of law, and improving education; a new secure embassy and consulates in Pakistan; diplomatic operations; and the Pakistan Counterinsurgency Fund.
- Requires the President, by February 2010 to report to Congress on an assessment of the performance of the Afghan and Pakistani governments in five key areas.

"More than 28,000 Mississippians serve in the U.S. Armed Forces, active and reserve. Of these, nearly 4,000 are from the First Congressional District," said Congressman Childers. "The honorable men and women who serve our country make significant sacrifices to do so, and their families are often the unseen victims of our wars. This legislation recognizes the hardships our troops and military families face, and provides them with the care and services they need and deserve."

The Supplemental Appropriations bill includes funding for the following initiatives to improve military health care and provide family services:

- Medical and dental services to U.S. forces and their family members, including research into Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD); orthopedic and other trauma research, treatment and rehabilitation; and the purchase of equipment for rehabilitation facilities.
- Hospital construction to replace hospitals that are decades old and do not meet current standards for medical care.
- Wounded warrior complexes.
- Accelerating and enhancing the construction of new hospitals at Bethesda and Ft. Belvoir to replace Walter Reed.
- Family advocacy programs, which provide families with access to child psychologists, child care, financial counseling, and other support.
- Construction of 25 new child development centers, which will provide care for an additional 5,000 children.
- The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program, which will provide programs to members of the Reserve and their families for the challenges of mobilization and their return to civilian life.

The legislation also provides funding for the following initiatives:

- Pandemic flu response, which includes expanding federal stockpiles of anti-viral drugs, developing and purchasing vaccines, assisting state and local responses, and supporting global efforts to track and contain the spread of a pandemic.
- Economic aid and security assistance for other key areas in the Middle East, including Israel, Egypt, West Bank and Gaza, Jordan, and Lebanon.
- Addressing growing violence along the U.S.-Mexico border.

###